

Yosemite National Park Planning  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite National Park, CA  
95389



# HETCH HETCHY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM Upgrade Project

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK PLANNING  
Attn: Hetch Hetchy Communications System  
Upgrade Project  
P.O.Box 577  
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

Design by EDAW

# HETCH HETCHY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM Upgrade Project

FEBRUARY 2006

## PUBLIC SCOPING NOTICE

### Dear Interested Citizen:

Hetch Hetchy Water and Power (HHW&P), a subsidiary of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, in partnership with both the Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) and the U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), is proposing a communications system upgrade project. With this scoping notice we would like to inform you about the Proposed Action and invite public comment pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

You are receiving this scoping notice either because you have expressed a specific interest in this project; because you have expressed an interest in similar projects in the past, or because HHW&P, the USFS or the NPS believes you may be directly or indirectly affected by this project.

Scoping is the procedure used by the USFS and NPS to identify important issues and to determine the extent of analysis necessary for an informed decision on a proposed action; therefore, scoping is part of our NEPA environmental analysis process.

The responsible NPS and USFS Officials (Yosemite National Park Superintendent, Forest Supervisor) will consider any scoping comments received on this project in determining the extent of further environmental analysis. Unless extraordinary circumstances are identified, we anticipate the proposed project will require preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to NEPA and National Historic Preservation Act guidelines. The EA will be part of a joint document in collaboration with the City and County of San Francisco that includes an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL J. TOLLEFSON  
Yosemite National Park  
Superintendent

JOHN R. SWANSON  
Stanislaus National Forest  
Groveland District Ranger



USFS Burnout Ridge Vicinity

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

How you can participate:

**1) Attend one of the Open Houses**  
Wednesday, February 22, 2006 & Friday, March 24, 2006,  
at the Yosemite Valley visitor Center Auditorium.

**2) Attend the Site Visit on Friday, March 10, 2006**  
(Please RSVP by March 1, 2006, with attached postcard).

**3) Stay informed**  
by checking the NPS and USFS web sites and requesting a copy of the 2007 draft IS/EA (with attached postcard).

**4) Submit your comments** on this project to the Park Service or the Forest Service by Monday, March 27, 2006 (see addresses inside).

Written comments to this proposal are invited in order to help us identify significant issues that may be associated with the proposed action. Comments received will be considered in reaching a decision. In order for your concerns to be fully considered throughout the environmental review process, comment letters must be postmarked no later than March 27, 2006. Comments should include name, address, and organization represented, if any. See inside for more details.



NPS Poopenaut Pass Vicinity

## PROPOSED ACTION

Currently, microwave radio equipment is used to transmit voice and data communications essential to the operation and security of Hetch Hetchy Water and Power's electric and water supply utilities. The existing radio equipment has become obsolete and is no longer supported by its manufacturers.

The proposed project includes upgrade activities at 31 sites including replacement of an existing 2 GHz analog microwave system, replacement of existing fiber optic terminal equipment, and installation of a new communications system in the O'Shaughnessy Dam, Cherry Lake, and Lake Eleanor areas. The upgrade to the communications system also will accommodate the addition of communications equipment vital to both NPS and USFS operations.

Based on preliminary analysis, three currently undeveloped sites (one located on USFS property within Stanislaus National Forest (referred to as Burnout Ridge), the second on NPS property within Yosemite National Park in the Poopenaut Pass vicinity, and the third on the south face of Cherry Lake Dam on HHWP property) are under consideration for installation of a new communication tower and equipment shelter at each location as part of this communications system upgrade. The remainder of work on the proposed project would be performed at existing HHWP sites or on existing HHWP transmission lines.

The Project also would include an amendment to the Stanislaus National Forest Plan, as this plan currently does not provide for the development of new communications sites beyond those identified in the Forest Plan.

## PURPOSE & NEED

The goal of the project is to upgrade the communications system with an improved system that would provide capacity and technology to meet HHWP's current and future needs, as well as accommodate communication equipment for USFS and NPS operations. The new system must be capable of supporting the existing circuits currently in use.

A system upgrade would thus allow for improved radio communications vital to the operation of HHWP's utilities and support of USFS and NPS operational activities, such as law enforcement, search and rescue, and fire management improving the capability of each of these agencies to ensure dam security, visitor and staff safety, and protection of forest and park resources.

## OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEW SYSTEM

- Comply with FCC requirements to vacate the 2 GHz band
- Replace and update aged components of the communication system
- Add new critical communication sites to the system
- Integrate HHWP, NPS and USFS communications to provide for dam and facility security.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

Written scoping comments should be mailed to either of the following offices:

**Superintendent, Yosemite National Park,**  
**Attn:** Hetch Hetchy Communications System Upgrade Project,  
P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 Fax: 209/379-1294  
Email: YOSE\_planning@nps.gov

**District Ranger, Groveland Ranger District,**  
**Attn:** Hetch Hetchy Communications System Upgrade Project,  
24545 Highway 120, Groveland, CA 95321 Fax: 209-962-7412  
Email: comments-pacificsouthwest-stanislaus-groveland@fs.fed.us

*Electronic comments must be submitted in acceptable [plain text (.txt), rich text (.rtf) or Word (.doc)] formats. For electronically mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgment from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgment of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means [36 CFR 215.6 (a)(4)(iii)].*

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW TIMELINE

### February 2006

Scoping period begins February 21;  
Open House in Yosemite Valley on February 22.

### March 2006

Site Visit March 10, 2006;  
Open House in Yosemite Valley on March 24;  
Scoping period ends March 27.

### SUMMER 2006

Complete Environmental Studies

### FALL 2006

Prepare Draft Initial Study (IS)/ Environmental Assessment (EA)

### WINTER 2007

Draft IS/EA available for public review

The scoping period for this project is from February 21, 2006 to March 27th, 2006. A project overview and information will be presented at the Public Open Houses held in Yosemite Valley at the Visitor Center Auditorium on Wednesday, February 22, 2006 (from 2 PM to 6 PM), and Friday, March 24, 2006 (from 2 PM to 5 PM).

In addition, a site tour of the proposed project siting options within Yosemite National Park in the Poopenaut Pass vicinity will take place on Friday, March 10, 2006, (from 10 AM to 2 PM), weather permitting. In case of snow or rain, the site visit will be held on Friday, March 17, 2006. Please RSVP by March 1, 2006 with the postcard below if you would like to attend.

The environmental documentation on this project is expected to be completed during the summer and fall of 2006, and a public review draft IS/EA will be available in late Winter 2007.

If you wish to receive any future environmental review documents on this project, please fill in and return the attached postcard, or notify either the NPS or USFS at the above addresses. If we do not hear back from you, you may not receive further notice regarding the environmental review for this project. You may also stay informed by checking out the NPS and USFS websites for project fact sheets, meeting dates, and copies of all planning documents at:

[www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning) and [www.fs.fed.us/r5/stanislaus](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/stanislaus)

Please fax (209-379-1294) or mail this postcard by March 1, 2006, if you want to attend the site visit.

To request a copy of the Draft IS/EA, you may mail this return card up until November 2006.

RSVP for site visit within Yosemite National Park, March 10, 2006:

Attending site visit on March 10\*, 2006, with \_\_\_\_\_ person(s).  
Please send me more information about the site visit.

\*(In case of snow or rain, the site visit will be held on March 17, 2006.)

Request copy of draft IS/EA: When it is released in the Winter of 2007, please send me a  printed copy or  CD ROM of the Hetch Hetchy Communications System Upgrade Project Draft Initial Study (IS) / Environmental Assessment (EA)

Please print:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact:  Mail  Email